



The impact of Buckland area traffic crosses municipal lines; that is why I worked closely with legislators representing East Hartford and South Windsor in 2006 to secure \$500,000 for a regional traffic impact study. The Buckland Study Group which has been charged with conducting this study is due to release its findings by the end of 2008.

Aid For Our Towns

A very important part of my job representing the people of the 4th state Senate District is ensuring Manchester, Bolton, Glastonbury & Marlborough receive their fair share of state funding. I am pleased to report the following grants and reimbursements from the state in Fiscal Year 2008–2009:

	Fiscal Year 08–09
Total Education Grants	\$44,168,205
Town Aid Road Fund Grant	\$758,514
Mashantucket Pequot & Mohegan Fund Grant	\$1,076,728
Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP)	\$715,735
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$2,059,306
Total	\$48,778,488

Construction of New Head Start Facility in Manchester

In 2006 I secured more than \$4.2 million in funding for the construction of a new city-wide Head Start facility to be built at the current location of the Bentley School in Manchester. Construction is expected to begin soon. The new Head Start Center will be a state-of-the-art facility offering centralized, full-day preschool. There are already over 200 children on a waiting list, but it is anticipated that the list will be eliminated when expanded enrollment begins once this new facility is open.

Tougher Requirements, Education for Teen Drivers

Communities across the state are grieving over the loss of young lives in tragic automobile accidents. The General Assembly made several changes this year to help prevent fatal accidents involving teenage drivers and passengers. Teens are now required to spend more time behind the wheel before they can get a driver’s license and they cannot drive with passengers under age 18 who are not immediate family for a year. Teens will also face harsh penalties—including license suspensions—for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, reckless driving, speeding, street racing and using a cell phone while driving. While we cannot prevent every accident, if we can save just one family from tragedy, these new laws will be a success.




Dear Neighbor:

By almost any measure, the nation is in a recession, and states across America are feeling the effects.

Connecticut faces these uncertain times with a biennial budget that makes important investments in local schools, roads, health care, school readiness, municipal aid, criminal justice programs, and other vital needs.


However, state revenue forecasts continue to drop, and just as Connecticut’s families are tightening their belts, so must our state government. While we held the line on any new spending during this past legislative session, we were still able to find ways to help the people of our state by enacting long-needed reforms in our criminal justice system, health care, consumer protection, and the environment.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
  
Mary Ann Handley  
State Senator

**Fighting the High Cost of Gasoline & Energy**

We all know that the cost of fuel is sky-high—affecting how much you pay for gas and groceries. While we can’t stop fuel prices from rising, we can prevent tax increases from further driving up the cost. This June, we said NO to a scheduled increase in the gross receipts tax. By blocking this tax hike, we’re hoping to save you a few cents on each gallon, and that adds up. We’re also taking action to help seniors and working families survive the high cost of the looming home heating oil season.



State Senator

# Mary Ann Handley

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I’m proud to  
represent the  
4th Senate District:  
**Bolton**  
**Glastonbury**  
**Manchester**  
**Marlborough**

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State Senator  
**Mary Ann Handley**  
4TH DISTRICT



## Protecting Homeowners & Our Economy

This year, I supported Representative Ryan Barry’s comprehensive legislation designed to keep families in their homes and proactively protect our state’s economy from the national subprime mortgage crisis. Across the country, quality of life is being diminished, home values are plummeting, and families are faced with difficult choices as home foreclosure rates have skyrocketed 75 percent since 2006.



Connecticut has one of the highest home foreclosure rates in the country. About 71,000 Connecticut mortgages are adjustable-rate, high-interest subprime mortgages, and 21,000 of those will reset to a higher rate in the next 12 months.

The legislation we passed created a special loan program which allows the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to purchase home loans from lenders and place eligible borrowers on affordable payment schedules for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages. We also re-initiated the state’s Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program and gave CHFA the authority to purchase foreclosed homes to create affordable and supportive housing. These programs will help thousands of Connecticut families and will help prevent the mass foreclosures other states have experienced over the past year.

Additionally, we created a foreclosure mediation program for lenders and borrowers, established a mortgage crisis job training team, and created new restrictions and licensing requirements for mortgage lenders and brokers to prevent predatory lending practices in the future. All these initiatives were created without increasing state spending.

**TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION** on any of the following issues, fill out this coupon and mail it to me, e-mail or call my office. Make sure to give your name and mailing address and indicate which issues you’re interested in. My contact information is on the opposite side of this mailer.

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# LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

## Criminal Justice Reforms

Crime is an issue that has been on the minds of many state residents for several months, and the General Assembly took strong and decisive action this year on a variety of criminal justice matters. The legislature created the new crime of “home invasion,” which carries a mandatory 10-year minimum jail term, and created a full-time, professional Board of Pardons and Parole. We also approved doubling and tripling prison sentences for the most violent of criminals while simultaneously giving criminal justice professionals the \$10 million needed to enhance public safety. That money will be used to prosecute repeat offenders, track sexual offenders, hire more investigators and probation officers, and increase funding for prisoner re-entry programs.

## Lowering Health Care Costs for Municipalities and Small Businesses

This legislative session we tried to tackle one of the biggest issues driving up our property taxes—health care costs for our cities and towns. The Connecticut Healthcare Partnership would allow municipalities, small businesses and nonprofits to voluntarily join the state employee health insurance plan. By expanding this large pool of insured, we would increase bargaining power and lower costs for municipalities. Not only would this benefit property tax payers, but it would also benefit small

businesses—they create the vast majority of jobs in Connecticut, but are hit the hardest when it comes to skyrocketing health care costs. As of this writing, the governor has indicated that she will veto this bill.

## Improving Hospital Staffing & Safety

In an effort to make sure that patients receive the care they deserve, the General Assembly unanimously passed legislation requiring hospitals to formalize staffing protocols for nurses. The law mandates that each facility make available to the state Department of Public Health its plan to ensure

nursing coverage that will provide maximum direct patient care. I also co-sponsored legislation that requires each hospital in the state to develop a plan

to reduce the incidence of persons contracting the methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). There are an estimated 100,000 deaths each year from MRSA infections in our nation’s hospitals. In Connecticut, the full extent of the problem is unknown, but about 85 percent of all MRSA infections are hospital-based. This new law requires the health-care community to identify methods to achieve reductions in hospital-associated infections.



## Allowing Seniors to Receive Care at Home

Many seniors who require long-term care would prefer to receive that care in their own home or with a relative caregiver. For many, that is not an option due to Medicaid reimbursement rules. A federal program called ‘Money Follows the Person’ allows Medicaid funds to ‘follow the patient’ from nursing homes to more personalized settings. The state program can currently enroll 700 seniors, but we expanded the program to accommodate up to 5,000. The state’s reimbursement rate for those in the program will climb from 50 to 75 percent for each enrollee. Most seniors prefer home care when complete independence is no longer possible, and this federal/state partnership grants that wish while shoring up the state’s finances.

## Global Warming Solutions

Connecticut has once again shown that it is a leader in environmental protection with the passage of a bill that creates a timeline and targets through 2050 for Connecticut to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. *An Act Concerning Connecticut Global Warming Solutions* unanimously passed the Senate after overwhelming passage in the House. The new law requires Connecticut to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to at least 10 percent below 1990 levels by January 1, 2020, and to at least 80 percent below 2001 levels by January 1, 2050. It is estimated that in 1990, Connecticut emitted 45 million metric tons of greenhouse gases. Most of these gases are the result of burning fossil fuels for transportation, though another heavy contributor is electric generation and residential energy use.

### ▲ CALLING FOR SMOKE-FREE CASINOS

As the Senate chair of the legislature’s Public Health Committee, I convened a press conference at which the legislative initiative in my committee to restrict smoking in Connecticut casinos was presented. The health benefit of a smoke-free workplace is enjoyed in most other places of employment and ought to be extended to the casinos. Unfortunately, my efforts did not meet with success this year, but I haven’t given up.

